



NOAA FISHERIES

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species

NMFS Requests Applications for Participation in the Atlantic Highly Migratory Species 2014 Shark Research Fishery

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) requests commercial shark fishermen who would like to participate in the 2014 shark research fishery to submit both a completed shark research fishery application and the required vessel information to the HMS Management Division by December 23, 2013 date.

Shark research fishery permits authorize participation in the shark research fishery and the collection of sandbar, other large coastal sharks (LCS), small coastal shark (SCS), and pelagic sharks from federal waters in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean Sea, for the purposes of scientific data collection, subject to 100 percent observer coverage.

NMFS will select a limited number of qualified applicants to participate in the 2014 shark research fishery based on the temporal and spatial needs of the research objectives, the available quota, the availability of observers, and the availability of the qualified applicants. These selected applicants will be issued shark research fishery permits and will be subject to 100 percent observer coverage on all shark research fishery trips. The shark research vessels may fish without an observer when not on a shark research fishery trip. A shark research fishery permit will only be valid only for the calendar year 2014 and only for the specific vessel and owner(s) listed on the permit, subject to the terms and conditions listed on the permit,

The specific conditions of the permit (e.g., trip limit, gear requirements, and number of trips per month) will depend, among other things, on the number of selected vessels, available quota, and the objectives of the research fishery.

NMFS will review the submitted applications based on the selection criteria as described in the Federal Register notice and information provided on the application form to determine which applicants are qualified to participate in the shark research fishery.

Qualified applicants are those that:

- possess a valid directed or incidental* commercial shark permit;
- possess a valid United States Coast Guard (USCG) safety inspection decal when the application is submitted;
- have not been charged criminally or civilly (e.g., issued a Notice of Violation and Assessment (NOVA) or Notice of Permit Sanction) for any HMS-related violation;
- have complied with NMFS observer programs and are able to take a NMFS-approved observer **; and,
- submit a completed application by 5 p.m., local time on December 23, 2013.

Only vessels that meet all of the above qualifications will be considered for the shark research fishery. * While incidental permit holders may apply, please note that for 2014, priority will be given to qualified directed permit holders to meet the research objectives. **Priority will also be given to vessels with past participation in the NMFS observer program.

Completed Shark Research Fishery Permit Applications that include all information required must be received no later than 5 p.m., local time on December 23, 2013, in order to be considered. For copies of the application, please write to the HMS Management Division, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or call (301) 427-8503 (phone), or (301) 713-1917 (fax). Copies of the application are also available at the HMS Management Division's website at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/index.htm>. Please submit completed applications to the HMS Management Division at the address listed above or by fax. Final decisions on the issuance of a shark research fishery permit will depend on the submission of all required information, and our review of applicant information as outlined in the Federal Register notice. Additionally, please be advised your application may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

This notice is a courtesy to individuals interested in HMS fisheries activities to keep you informed about the fishery. Official notice of Federal fishery actions is made through filing such notice with the Office of the Federal Register. For further information, contact Karyl Brewster-Geisz or Delisse Ortiz at (301) 427-8503.

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